

rects them, and they are thus found suitable enough for second-rate work. Under-contracting (*marchandage*) abolished, the master will no longer have no interest in employing inferior workmen. He will apply to the best, to those who are now *maître-ouvriers*, and who joining usually more power of arrangement and love of work to greater skill, will redouble their efforts in order to bring back their lost profit. The workmen formerly employed under them will be repulsed, and in place of reduced wages, will have none at all.

What we are here relating is matter of history. Things have happened just thus to the operative carpenters. They combined to get their wages advanced; they obtained what they asked, and immediately the bad or middling workmen were driven from the builders' yards. A similar fate is in store for the workmen of other trades. Will it be supposed that trade will acquire such activity that it will be necessary to employ any sort of workmen, and that no hands will remain idle? The idea is futile. If the quantity of work produced by the inferior workmen is no longer in proportion to the wages they receive, the price of the object produced will increase, and work will fatally diminish. What obstacle, what stoppage can be applied to this retrograde movement?

Let us pass to the reduction of the hours of labour.

Doubtless, such a measure is eminently desirable and admirable humane. Doubtless, we cannot too much deplore the fatigue and the pains of the workman, bent all the day long over an ungrateful task, without respite or intermission, without variety or pleasure. Doubtless, it is necessary that all statesmen and philanthropists should unite to render life agreeable, to give free air and pleasant light to those intelligent and laborious generations which succumb to labour; but will the means taken enable us to attain the end? Here lies the question. A diminution in the duration of labour, in fact, an increase in the wages paid. This increase of wages resolves itself finally into an increase in the price of the object produced. There will then be loss for somebody. Who will bear it?

The contractor? Can it be thought of for a moment? Do we not know at the present day on what terms contracts are undertaken? The profit of the contractors in the greater part of works is as restricted as possible, sometimes disappearing altogether. We see master-tradesmen, who every day submit even to some loss, hoping that the turning over of the funds which pass through their hands will enable them to live, to meet their engagements, and wait for better times, or retard their downfall; others expecting to regain by fraud what they expose themselves to lose, and seeking from robbery a profit which the blunderings of competition deprive them of. This, without doubt, is not legitimate competition; it is what we deprecate.

We see, then, as matters now stand, that it is not the contractor who can sustain the loss. Will it, then, be the proprietor? We see no inconvenience in this, provided he consents to it. But this party wishes to derive from his money a reasonable interest, in proportion to the risk he runs. If the cost of building diminishes this interest, and brings it below the real value of money in the market, the consequence is easy to foresee: he will take away his capital from a pursuit which does not furnish sufficient remuneration, and carry it elsewhere. Work will thus be exhausted. Thus, turn to whatever side we may, we see that the movement of wages, according to human regulations, obeys inevitably those necessary causes which the law does not control, and which it cannot subdue. The workmen are wise—they are intelligent—they will meditate on these truths so important, so incontestable, so frequently verified by facts. They suffer, we know, and we suffer with them. They are impatient to arrive at a better state. Alas! we, who every day are witnesses of their courage, their perseverance, and their moderation—we, who see them at work, exhausting their strength to live honestly and to maintain their families, our impatience is equal to theirs; nevertheless we have the courage to say to them, "Since you have waited so long, wait a little longer: have patience. You have lived

many years under a Government which, absorbed by the interests of corruption and of power, has taken no real care of you; under a Government odiously immoral and selfish, and which has therefore perished; but you may now have hope; you have at your head men whose high intelligence, which is equal to their immense task,—whose entire good faith and ardent love of good, which are above all suspicion, present you with absolute guarantees."

They desire your welfare, and they can accomplish it, or it is impossible. Trust in them and wait; trust in them and distrust yourselves. Do not forget that these questions are difficult; that one must grow grey in study to penetrate their depths, to measure the consequences of the slightest regulations, to embrace the relations which bind them to all the institutions which exist, and constitute our social state. Good faith may exist in hosts the most opposed to each other, when the question is that of resolving problems so difficult.

#### NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

THIS contract for enlarging the Andover Bridewell is taken by Messrs. Annett and Son, builders, there. A new process for burning bricks is said to have been invented by a Mr. Wm. Swaine, of Westonbury, Pembroke, by means of which a saving of more than half the usual quantity of fuel will be effected. The invention is to be patented. The new lunatic asylum for Wills has not been abetted, as was reported, though there appears to be "a scarcity of sites, at least of eligible ones, and no great plenty of plans for the new erection." A decision, according to the *Hampshire Independent*, will shortly be come to by the committee, for recommendation to the sessions. The training-school in the Cathedral Close at Salisbury is to be enlarged by the Diocesan Board of Education, on the suggestion of the Government Inspector. The parish church of Stretton Sugwas has been repaired by Mr. Heather, of Hereford, the contractor. Its woodwork has been restored in oak. There is an acoustic pavement of the fifteenth century there in tolerable preservation. The spire of the old church at Hirkley is in a dangerous state, and on inspection, Mr. Broadbent, of Leicester, advised that a portion of it should be rebuilt. The ancient parish church of South Leith, near Edinburgh, is undergoing extensive repair. This edifice dates prior to 1196, and had its choir destroyed during the burning of Leith by the English army in 1544. A century afterwards it formed a stable for Cromwell's horses. Many dolights and furnishings, rings, &c., of Queen Mary and King James have been turned out during the repairs. At Glasgow, according to the local *Gazette*, canvas has been made available, by means of suction-pipes, for fire-engines and other purposes. The whole of the outside is canvas, and the interior vulcanised caoutchouc, which renders them not only perfectly water-tight, but equal in strength and durability to the best leather, with great comparative lightness and cheapness. The foundation-stone of the new church at Newtown, near Soberton, Hants, was laid on Thursday, the 15th instant. It is in the built in the Early English style, with fittings for 260, all free, and without doors. The cost will be 1,200. Mr. John Colson, of Winchester, is the architect; and Mr. Pink, of Hambledon, the builder.

**SURVEYORS' ASSOCIATION.**—A meeting of the new association was held on Wednesday last week, when it was stated that a deputation had waited on the Sanitary Commissioners, and had been received by Sir H. De la Beche and Mr. Edwin Chadwick, two of the commissioners. The remonstrance and representations made by the deputation were listened to with attention; but the gentlemen to whom they were addressed assured the deputation that they had no power to interfere with respect to the survey of London. The Commissioners of Sewers had undertaken to provide the survey, and to them the application should be made. A memorial to the Sewers Commissioners was then determined on.

#### THE MYSTERY OF ART-MANUFACTURE.

"ALL NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS."

SIR.—By the desire which has arisen on all sides for improvement in our manufactures, by the infusion of better taste in form and ornament, a vast deal of quackery has been begotten, which, unless it meets some check, will only tend to the private advantage of individuals, and not the advancement of art. The desire is but just that the artist should coalesce with the manufacturer; but their combined operations should be given to the world without any suspicion of intrigue, improper influence of journalism, or mystification of origin. If the artist and manufacturer unite; if the latter gives recompense for the talent of the inventor, there exists an honourable compact deserving of public patronage. The insinuation of agency to contrive these compacts under assumed or fictitious names, will prove eventually the curse of art-manufactures.

The preceding remarks are originated by some very visible symptoms in the getting up of the present free exhibition of select specimens of British manufactures at the Society of Arts, which you truly said, in a preceding number, bore the appearance of clique. Three years ago this Society of Arts rewarded, by the gift of medals, &c., some designs for articles of sea-service, by a gentleman who presented the designs under an assumed name; and it is for others to judge if they were cognizant of the matter, or to a condition of blissful ignorance of the real truth. The affair itself proved of very little consequence in results, for after plentifully foretelling that from the *peacocks* to the *washerwoman* tea would thenceforth only be drunk out of the society's pot, it has vanished from the crockery shops into oblivious seclusion.

The Society of Arts is at this moment again about to distribute a series of rewards for designs appropriate to art-manufacture. The society assumes the high office of passing judgment on efforts of mental skill and cultivated taste. The constitution of the society scarcely gives assurance of its fitness; and it becomes necessary, to sustain it in its new and arduous mission, that their proceedings in the ensuing distribution of rewards should not bear this impress of "clique." When the royal commission for promoting the fine arts gave premiums for the cartoons, &c., they wisely made it a condition that, if required, the successful competitors should execute a work to satisfy the commissioners that no extraneous aid had been employed, or deception practised. Will the Society of Arts do the same? That remains to be seen, or whether a good crop of the prizes may not be awarded to fictitious names, or to persons not authors of the designs, but to manufacturers who have ferreted out obscure talent, and are willing to absorb honours to which they have no more pretensions than the strutting jay of "Esop's Fables" to the bay-window plumes of the peacock. These suspicions are vaguely manifested by an examination of the catalogue of the present exhibition, which is swelled by the addition of nearly twenty names of persons who are not manufacturers at all of the articles exhibited under their names, but merely London traders of respectability. The addition of these names to the list is significant of adding variety to the paucity of "exposés." A bookseller in Bond-street has his name added to architectural brackets; another in Fleet-street descends to a mustard-pot; and the Messrs. Colnaghi, of Pall Mall East, are in a similar category with bottle stoppers, non unives, and salad forks. Some contributors, too, there, are whose names appear to the exposed articles in the catalogue, but are not found in the index, and among them we find J. S. Russell, probably the secretary, and Felix Summerly, the non-existent.

The most painful part of the present exhibition of the Society of Arts is the small figure made by the newly-appointed masters of the Government School of Design. It holds out a melancholy prospective to the students who may be condemned to years of study, under these principals, here displaying such a weak result of invention in art-manufacture. Whether their lucubrations have originated from good nature or otherwise, it is certain that if they are so prominently thrust forward by an